



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues:

I hope everyone had a restful Thanksgiving break. District 51 offices were closed on Thursday and Friday last week, so our family took advantage of some time together over good food and walking the GJ Turkey Trot with the community.

This time of year is always a busy yet exciting time for D51. We are moving closer to wrapping up a successful fall semester with our students while simultaneously planning for a strong start to the spring semester. Join us in encouraging your students to finish out the fall semester in a strong way by showing up each day prepared for success. The end of the fall semester brings many celebrations and fun events, and we don't want to lose sight of the importance of academic time on task over the next 2 ½ weeks, as well. Thank you for being a partner with us as we work towards our Strategic Plan Focus Area of having Prepared & Supported Students.

WRAPPING UP CELEBRATING AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Our Board of Education read a proclamation in early November recognizing November as American Indian Heritage Month. We encouraged our schools and community to honor the contributions of American Indians by observing in November through programs, cultural ceremonies, and activities.

To round out the various activities and celebrations our students and staff held in recognition of the month was a special guest presentation by Tina King Washington. The event was open to our community, and Ms. King spent the evening sharing her wisdom and expertise about the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's history and culture. I was able to attend with our son, and we gained wisdom and knowledge about the history of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe that we did not know before. It was great to see all of the D51 staff, families, and community who came out. Thank you to Board Secretary Lema for attending the event, as well.

Ms. King has been a lifelong educator and an advocate for Native American students, serving in various capacities throughout school districts in Colorado, including right here in D51 at Fruitvale Elementary. We appreciate the time and effort spent bringing our community together for this educational event. A huge thank you to Ms. Lisa King and our Director of Equity and Inclusion, Tracy Gallegos, for allowing our community to learn about the history and contributions of a valued culture here in Western Colorado. If you would like to learn more about the Ute Mountain Ute tribe, feel free to reach out to Tracy, and he can send you the list of recommended readings from Ms. King. I have picked up some of the titles already, and I am excited to learn more about the history of the Ute Mountain Utes.

STUDENT-ATHLETE SHOUTOUT

Many of our fall sports ended in early November, and now we get the chance to celebrate and recognize our Class 3A student-athletes for all their outstanding accomplishments. It takes great motivation, dedication, and focus to be a student-athlete, and all of our student-athletes worked hard this season. We would like to shout out the following students named to All-Conference. [Click here](#) to see the list of individual athletes and teams. Thank you to these athletes, and all of our student-athletes, for representing D51 with pride and class.

HOUR OF CODE

Next week, December 5 through 11, is Computer Science Education Week, and District 51 is excited to participate in the largest education event in history; Hour of Code. This event is an international movement that reaches millions of students each year in hundreds of countries worldwide. During this "Hour of Code," students in several schools across District 51 will spend one hour learning the basics of Computer Science through fun and engaging experiences, including interactive activities on learning to code.

Computing is the #1 source of wages in the U.S., but far too few students engage and learn about the industry each year. We are proud to offer this opportunity to students throughout our District. A shoutout to D51 Coordinator of STEM Programming, Jessica McDivitt, the STEM Program team, and our D51 Computer Science teachers for your creativity in connecting and educating your students on the world of Computer Science. Learn more about Hour of Code [here](#).

D51 FOUNDATION CHROMEBOOK GIVEAWAY

We have new dates for the District 51 Foundation Chromebook Giveaway! The new distribution dates will be December 7, 9, and 10. [Click here](#) for additional information, times, and distribution locations for the event.

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

Palisade High School is hosting its Choral Music Program's Holiday Performance and Fundraising event this weekend, December 9 and 10. *Sounds of the Season: A Myriad of Merry Melodies* is a concert that showcases holiday choral music and raises funds to financially support the endeavors of our choral music students at Palisade High School. Many of these opportunities (state, regional, or national honor choirs, conventions, and festivals) have applications, auditions, and traveling fees accompanying their programs. *Sounds of the Season* allows our choral music program to raise the necessary funds to offset costs for our successful student vocalists. You can find more information about the event [here](#).

BEST OF THE WEST MUSIC FESTIVAL

We're excited to share that several students from our four D51 high schools were nominated to participate in the Select Band Performances during the Best of the West Music Festival.

High School Band Directors nominate their most talented students to compete for a spot in these select bands. This multi-day music festival features CMU students and faculty, masterclasses, and sessions for music teachers seeking continuing education. The event will culminate with three large high school select bands coming together to perform after one and half days of vigorous rehearsals and sectionals. Putting together this event is no easy feat. I want to thank all our High School Band Directors, CMU staff, and their Department of Music for putting together this extraordinary event, allowing our students the opportunity to showcase their talents. Good luck to all performing, and we hope you will join us in celebrating their accomplishments!

FRUITA MONUMENT HIGH SCHOOL THEATER

Last night was the opening night for Fruita Monument High School's winter theater program: "Conspiracy Street." This year's program is a parody of "Sesame Street," where different muppet characters become captivated by topics such as JFK and the Moon landing. In addition, the program focuses on learning the power of love and getting along with your neighbors.

Additional performances will occur tonight, December 2, and tomorrow, December 3, at 7 p.m. in the FMHS Auditorium. It's a show you don't want to miss! So, if you and your family want something to do this weekend, I encourage you to support our Wildcats while enjoying an entertaining night of fun-filled performance! Shoutout to Ryan Crabtree, Christian Herring, and all the FMHS Theater staff for putting on such a fantastic performance. Seeing how excited and engaged these students are is truly inspiring, and they couldn't do it without your leadership.

MESA COUNTY WALK & WHEEL DAY CHALLENGE

In October, Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office challenged D51 elementary and middle school students to participate in Walk & Wheel Day, a local challenge encouraging students to walk or roll to school. The Federal Highway Administration established the Safe Routes to Schools program in 2005 to address the barriers that make walking and bicycling to school a reality for more children. Parents stated that unsafe drivers and traffic danger were why they did not allow their children to walk to school.

Lincoln Orchard Mesa Elementary won the Walk and Wheel Day Challenge, with 240 students participating! The school received new recess equipment for garnering the most participation. Well done, LOM...way to represent!

WILDCAT WINTER WONDERLAND INVITATIONAL

Fruita Monument High School is hosting its 2nd Annual Speech & Debate tournament, featuring 12 schools from across the Western Slope. These students will compete in various speech, interpretation, and debate events. Not only will they place during these competition rounds, but they can also qualify for State and National tournaments. The competition will be held at FMHS on Friday, December 9, from 4:30-9:30 p.m. and Saturday, December 10, from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

If you're looking for an opportunity to become involved with our programs, the event is looking for judges (no experience required), and you can sign up [here](#). By signing up to volunteer at this event, you not only get to support our students, but I think you will be pleasantly surprised at the excitement that will fill the room. These kids are dedicated and have put countless hours and effort into practicing for this competition. Special thanks to Susan Berg and her staff for putting this event together and helping our students excel inside and outside the classroom!

Brian Hill

Dr. Brian Hill
Superintendent of Schools
Mesa County Valley School District 51
brian.hill@d51schools.org
970.254.5193



2115 Grand Ave.
Grand Junction, CO 81501
d51schools.org
(970) 254-5100